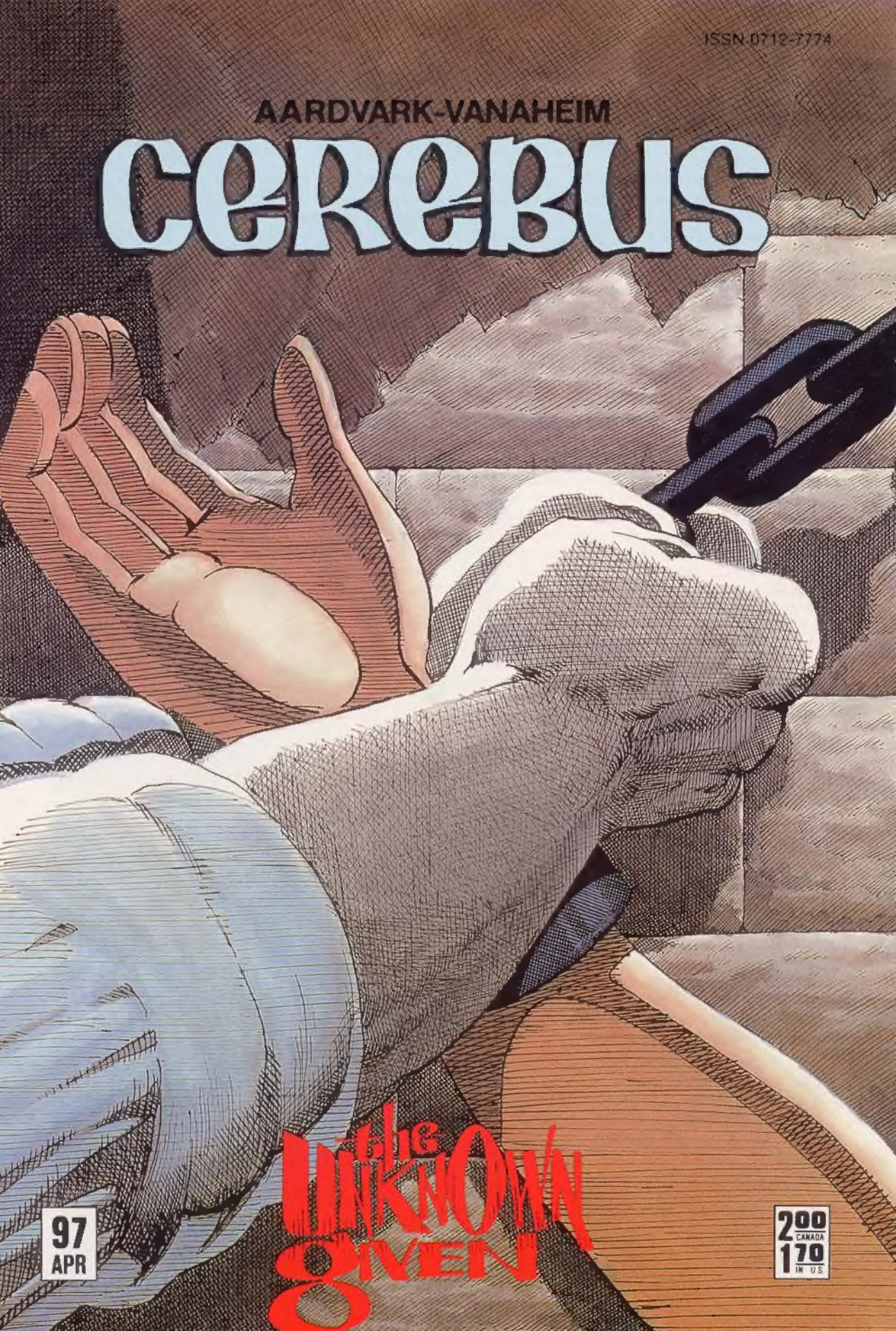
ISSN 0712-7774

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

CEREBUS



the UNKNOWN given

97
APR

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N O T E • F R O M • T H E P R E S I D E N T

I quit smoking January 23.

See, Gerhard quit just after Christmas and I told him if he still wasn't smoking after a month that I would quit as well. It really wasn't all that difficult -- basically, I just substituted exercising for smoking. Whenever I wanted a cigarette I would do about thirty sit-ups or so. Everyone who knows me at all well has a great deal of trouble believing that I actually quit. I mean a **good** day for me was two packs --- a bad day anywhere up to four or five. A lot of people smoke before a meal. Every smoker smokes after a meal. I used to smoke **during** a meal. A spoonful of soup, a drag on the cig, a spoonful of soup, a drag on the cig.

I have a message for all the smokers out there.

Ready?

Enjoy it. Smoke'em in the morning, smoke 'em at night. Chain smoke them when you feel you have to. Smoke in "no smoking" sections. If someone objects, blow smoke in their face. Smoke in bed. If you like smoking it is unquestionably one of the great pleasures of your life. A little event that's just for you. Out of eight years that I smoked between fifty and a hundred cigarettes a day there were maybe a dozen cigarettes that I didn't enjoy. I was one of the coolest smokers you ever saw. I extracted them from the pack with flare. I lit them with panache. I could blow smoke rings. Big ones, little ones, I could exhale a thin stream of smoke; a series of small clouds; I could blow it out my nose; blow it out my mouth; I could blow it out my nose and then out my mouth; I could exhale out of my mouth; inhale it through my nose and exhale it out my mouth again. At conventions non-smokers like Valentino, P. Craig Russel or Matt Wagner would bum cigarettes off of me. I had so much fun smoking people who never even **thought** of smoking wanted to try one.

So what's the message?

If you smoke; enjoy it. Don't torture yourself that you **should** quit. If you're ready to quit, you will. If not having a cigarette for ten minutes makes you break out in a cold sweat, gives you stomach cramps makes you cranky and short-tempered, you are not ready to quit. My heart is with you guys. Almost all of my close friends are hardcore smokers. You are, as a group, more interesting and more fun than non-smokers. As for **anti**-smokers.....

You people are among the rudest, most sanctimonious, anal-retentive, strait-laced, shrill, obnoxious, irritating, unimaginative, intolerant, bigoted, narrow-minded, loud-mouthed and just plain despicable and vile creatures that ever crawled out from some place dark and slimy. You should all get a loathesome disease someplace that shows and die a thousand excrutiating deaths.

You know it was worth quitting just to be able to say that? And I mean especially for the bitch from Now Comics who kept reporting Ger and I for smoking at the San Diego Con but who still had the nerve to crash our party.

Oh, and the lady I'm dating now doesn't smoke either, so, I finally have an answer to the question; 'What do non-smokers do after sex?'

Why, they do it again.

CEREBUS

No. 97 APRIL 1987

DAVE SIM
President

KAREN McKIEL
Administrator

GERHARD
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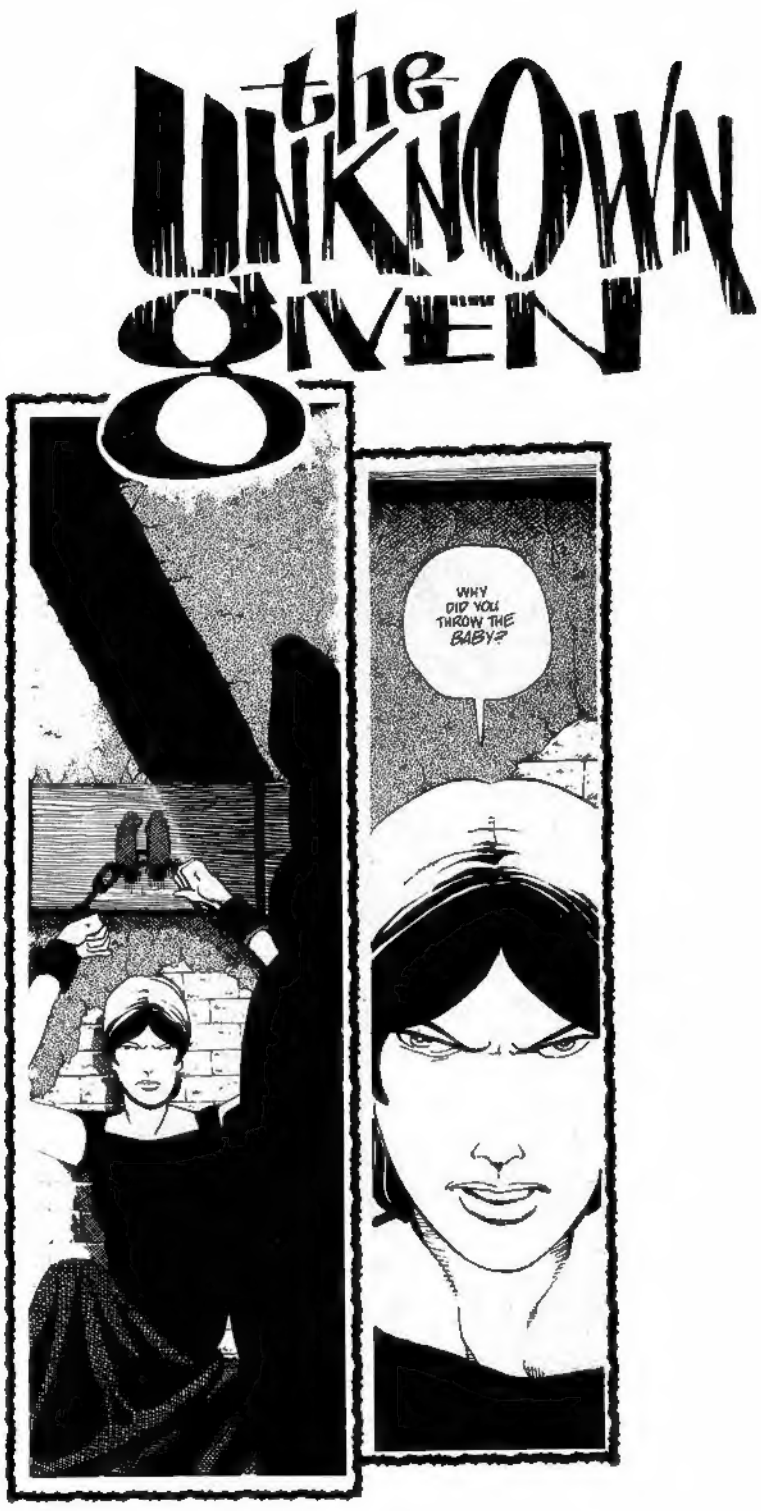

the UNKNOWN
GIVEN
WHY DID YOU THROW THE BABY?

WHY DID CEREBUS ... ?
OH.
THAT.
CEREBUS DOESN'T LIKE BABIES ...
...AND?
THAT'S IT...
CEREBUS DOESN'T LIKE BABIES. THEY'RE NOISY AND THEY'RE MESSY AND THEY STINK...

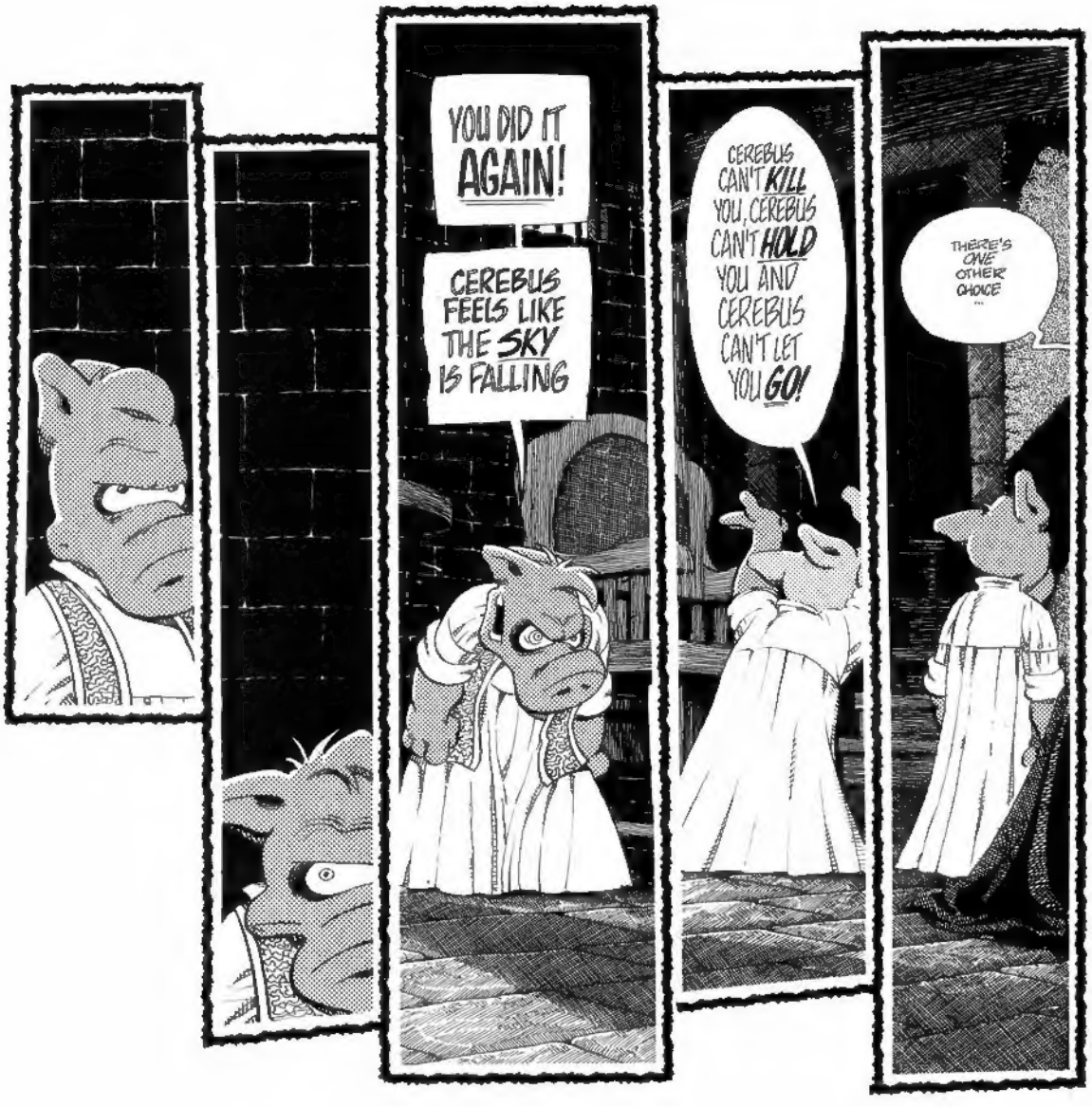
INDEED.
POOR OLD WEISSHAUPT ...
HE WAS SURE YOU'D CONVERTED TO KEVILLISM
I MUST CONFESS I COULDN'T MAKE HEAD OR TAIL OF IT.
THOUGH I WASN'T WITHOUT A CERTAIN... ADMIRATION
THE MENTAL EXERTIONS WEISSHAUPT AND I MIGHT HAVE SPARED OURSELVES ...
HAD WE BUT KNOWN!
'BABIES.'
'STINK.'
WELL THEY DO!!

BESIDES-- THERE'S TOO DAMN MANY OF THEM...
"ONE LESS MOUTH TO FEED..."
"...IS ONE LESS MOUTH TO FEED."
SO YOU REALLY DID SAY THAT ON THE ROOF?
AYE.
WHAT ABOUT IT?
IT'S A DIRECT QUOTE FROM MY KEVILLIST MANIFESTO ...
WHERE DID YOU...?
CEREBUS READ IT ON THE WALL OF A LATRINE ONCE.

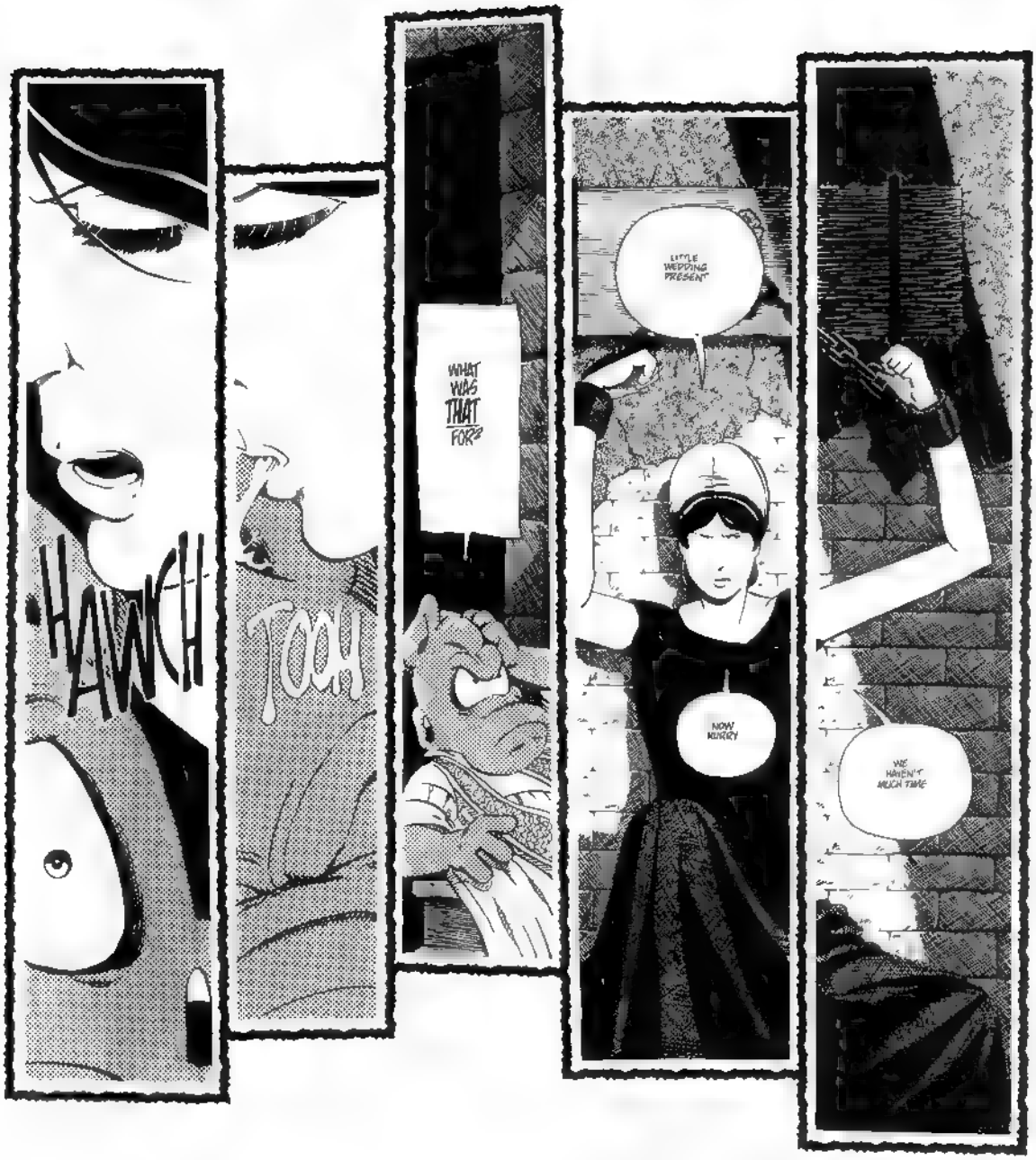
IMMORTALITY IS MINE.
WHAT?
NOTHING.
YOU SHOULD BE MORE CAREFUL.
ABOUT SOUNDING LIKE ME I MEAN ...
YOUR CHURCH ...
YOUR CHURCHES ...
VALUE THE LIVES OF THE FAITHFUL ABOVE ALL ELSE...
THEY'LL STAND FOR YOUR WHIMSICAL GESTURES--
LIKE THROWING CRIPPLED OLD MEN OFF OF BUILDINGS
--UP TO A POINT.
YOU THINK THEY INTEND TO KILL CEREBUS LIKE THEY DID THE OTHER POPES?

MM.
I DOUBT IT.
ASSUMING YOU FIND ME GUILTY OF SOMETHING AND ARRANGE A SUITABLY AGONIZING EXECUTION FOR ME...
...WELL...
THAT SHOULD ALLAY ANY FEARS OF YOU BEING 'SOFT' ON KEVILLISM ...
THAT'S GOOD NEWS.
OF COURSE IF YOU DO EXECUTE ME CIRIN IS GOING TO SEND ENOUGH MERCENARIES INTO IEST TO GUARANTEE THAT YOU'LL BE HANGING FROM A LAMPOST INSIDE OF A FORTNIGHT ...

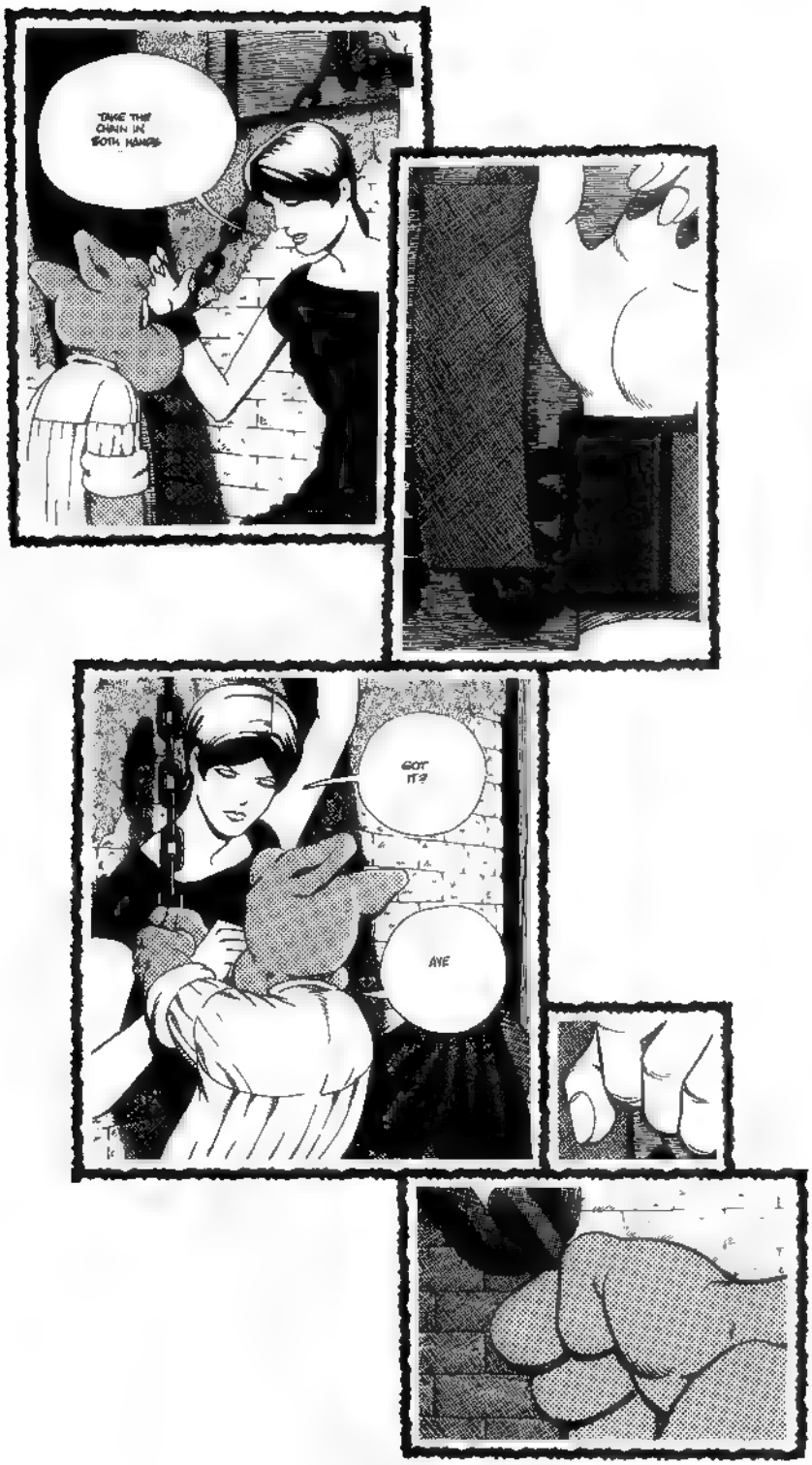
THAT'S BAD NEWS.
YOU SEE, CIRIN WANTS THE PLEASURE OF MY DEMISE RESERVED FOR HERSELF ...
SHE'S SOMEWHAT OBSESSIVE ON THE SUBJECT
YOU COULD JUST CONDEMN ME TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT ...
AYE?
UNFORTUNATELY YOUR CHURCHES WOULD NEVER BELIEVE I WASN'T RUNNING THE SHOW BEHIND THE SCENES ...
NO GOOD THEN.
NO.
YOU COULD JUST LET ME GO -- BUT THEN WE'RE BACK TO YOU BEING SOFT ON KEVILLISM ...
AYE.

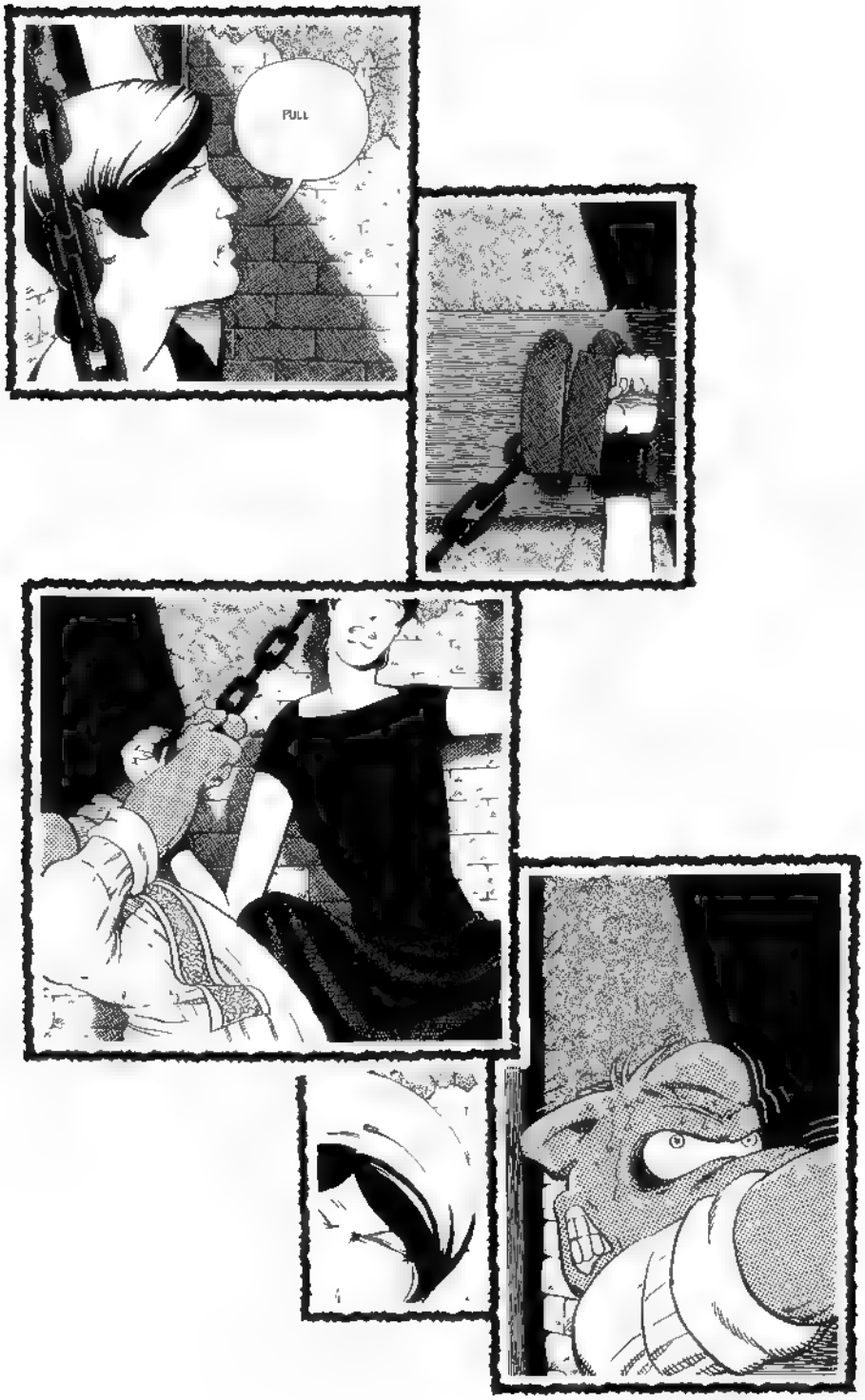

YOU DID IT AGAIN!
CEREBUS FEELS LIKE THE SKY IS FALLING
CEREBUS CAN'T KILL YOU, CEREBUS CAN'T HOLD YOU AND CEREBUS CAN'T LET YOU GO!
THERE'S ONE OTHER CHOICE...

WHAT'S THAT?
BREAK ME OUT OF THESE CHAINS, LET ME KNOCK YOU UNCONSCIOUS. I KNOW A SECRET WAY OUT OF HERE THAT WAY YOU DON'T HAVE TO HOLD ME. KILL ME OR LET ME GO. NO ONE WILL EVER BE ABLE TO CHALLENGE YOUR RULE OVER BOTH CHURCHES.
ONE MORE THING


HAWK!
TOOH
WHAT WAS THAT FOR?
LITTLE WEDDING PRESENT
NOW HURRY
WE HAVEN'T MUCH TIME

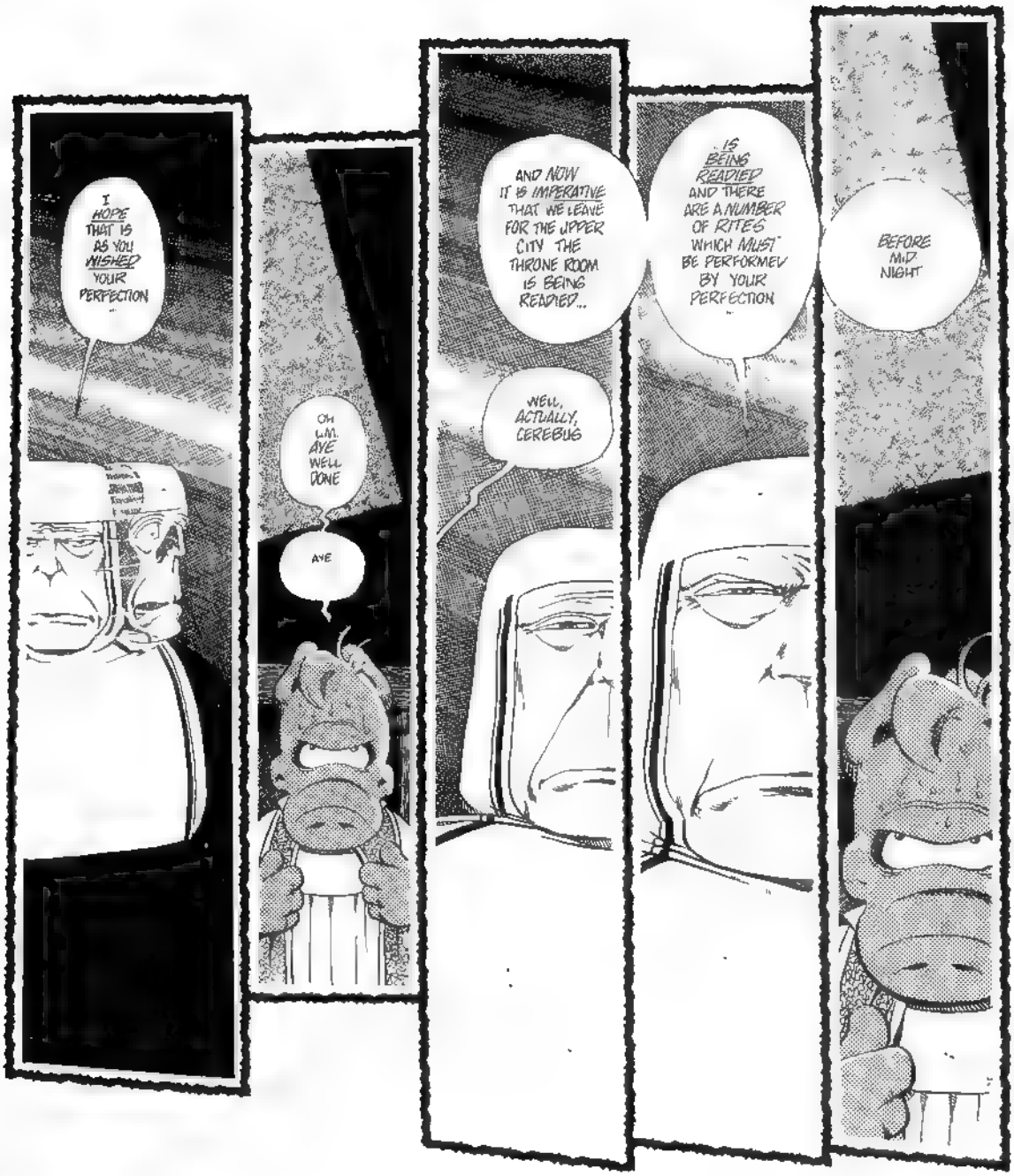
HURRY!!
DON'T YOU?
YOU WANT TO LIVE DON'T YOU?

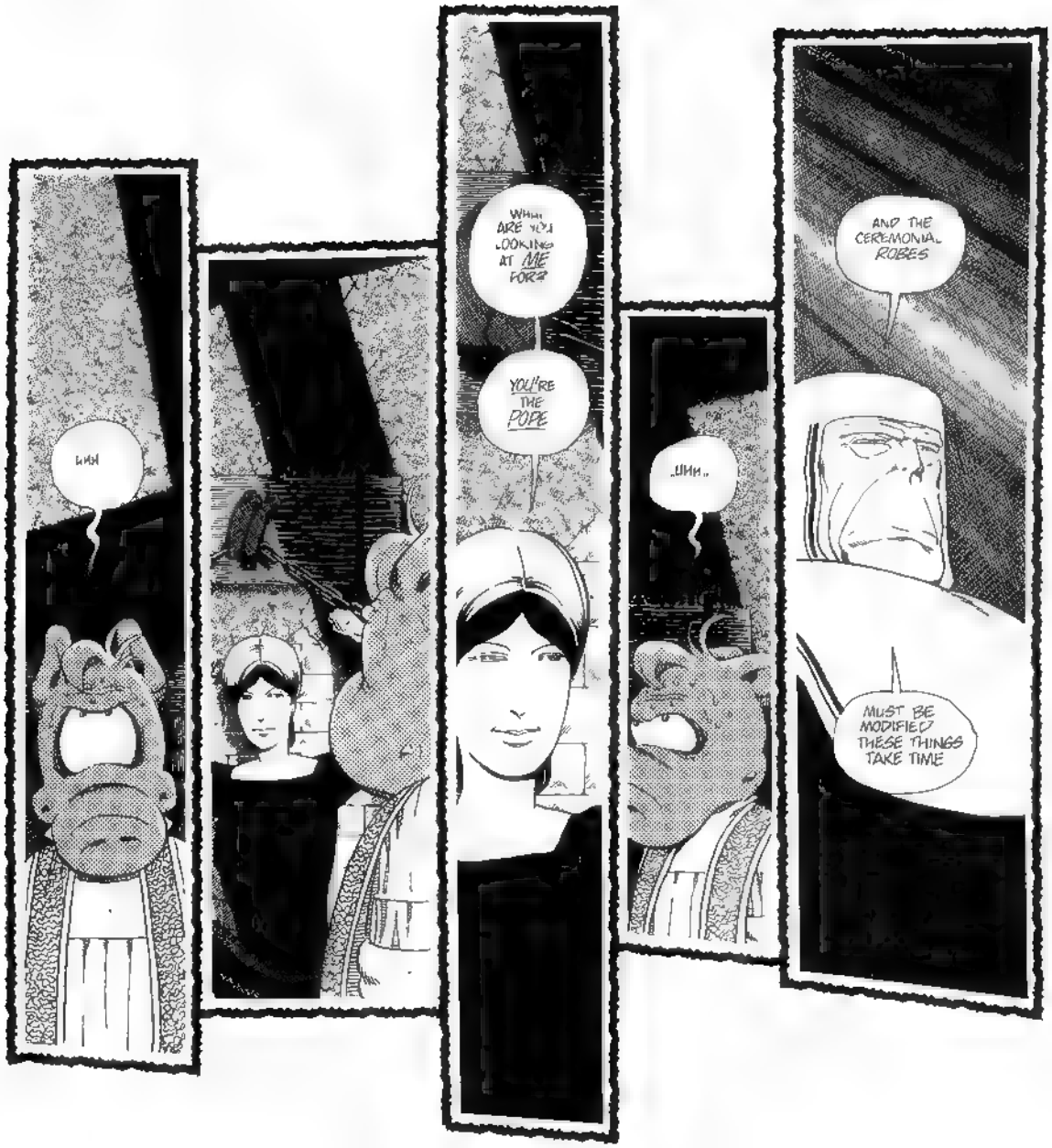

TAKE THE CHAIN IN BOTH HANDS
GOT IT?
AYE

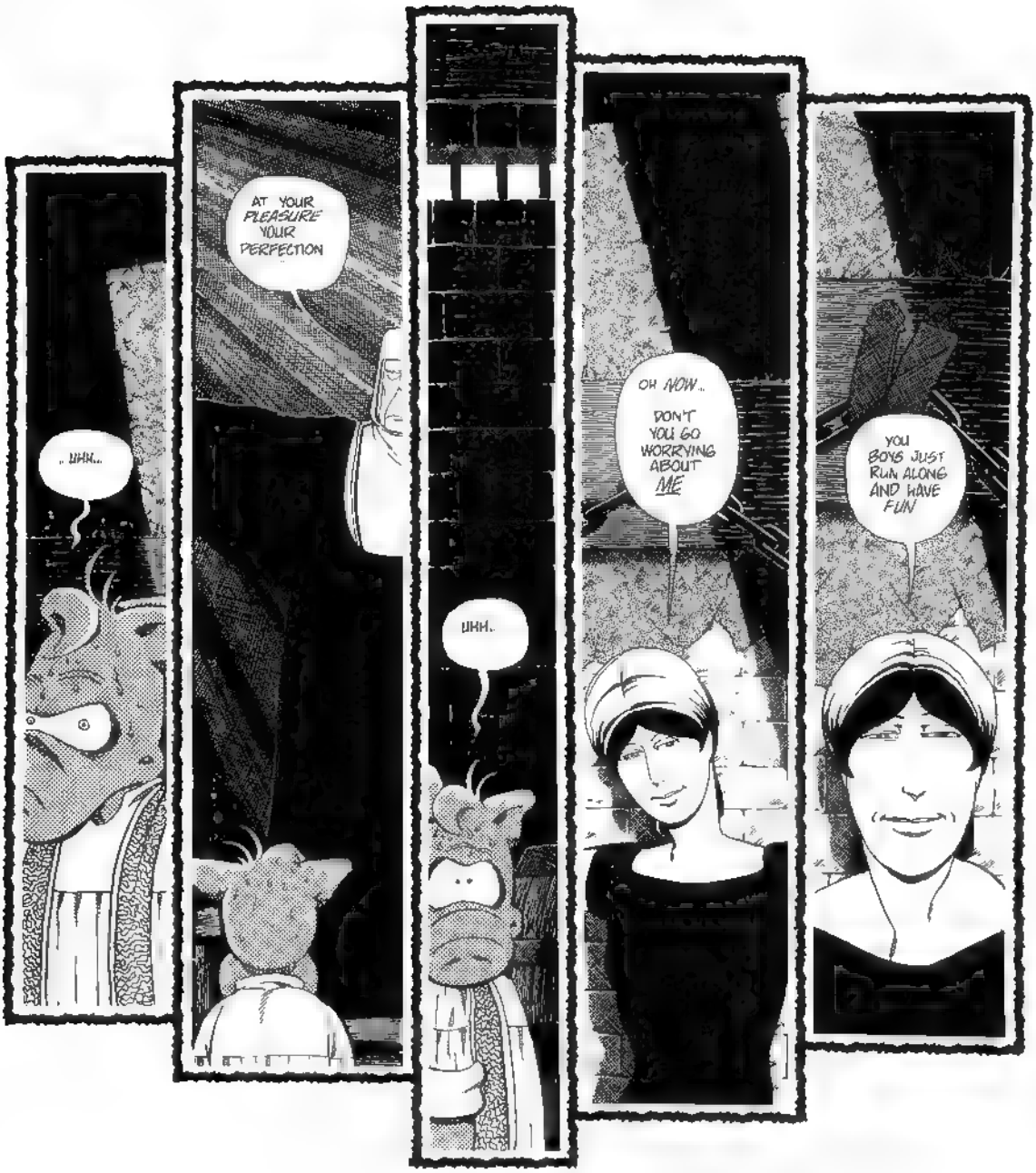

PULL

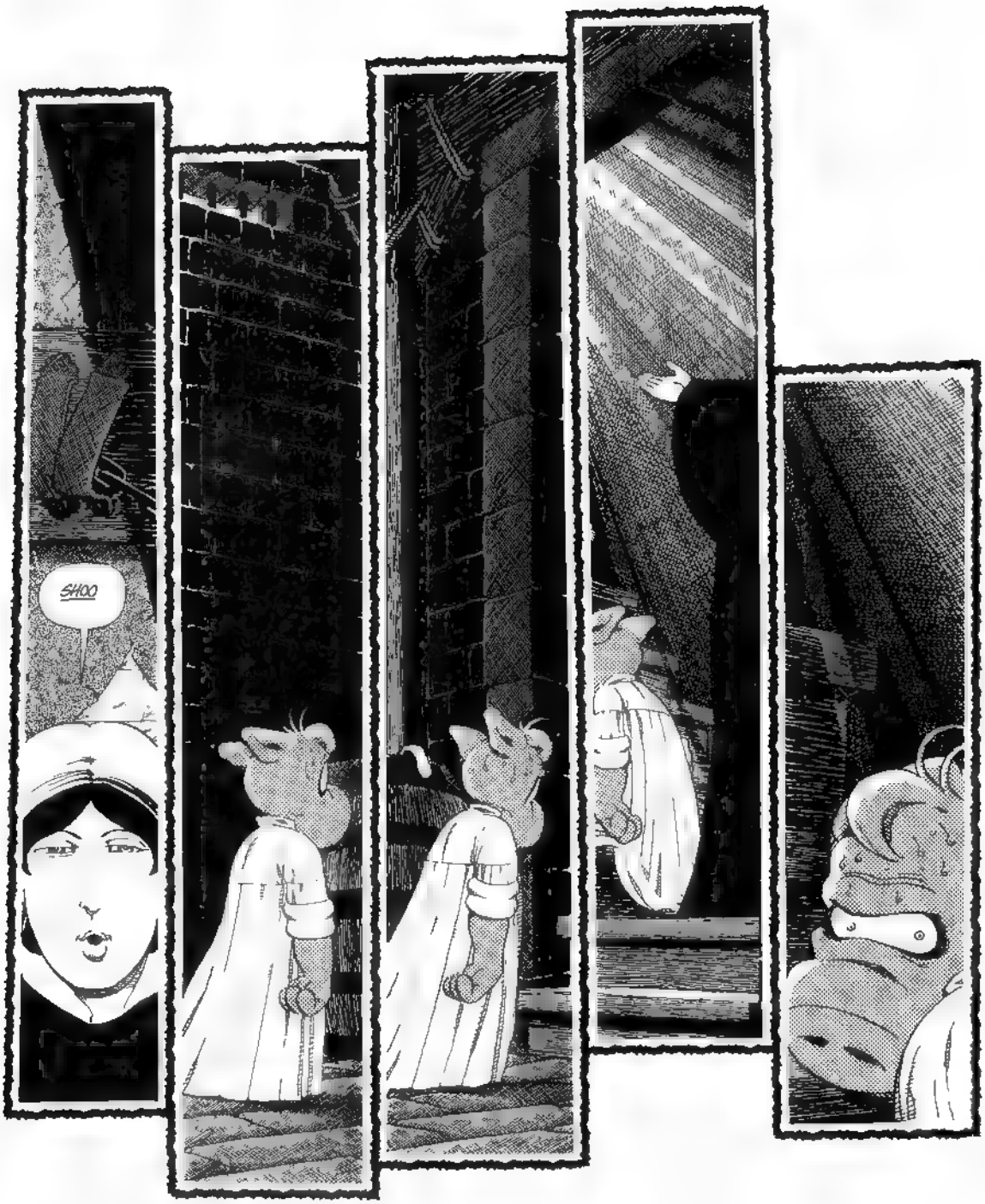
KNOCK KNOCK
CLIK CLAK
TIP TAP TIP
TAP TIP TAP
AYE!
YES!
COME IN!
WHO IS IT!

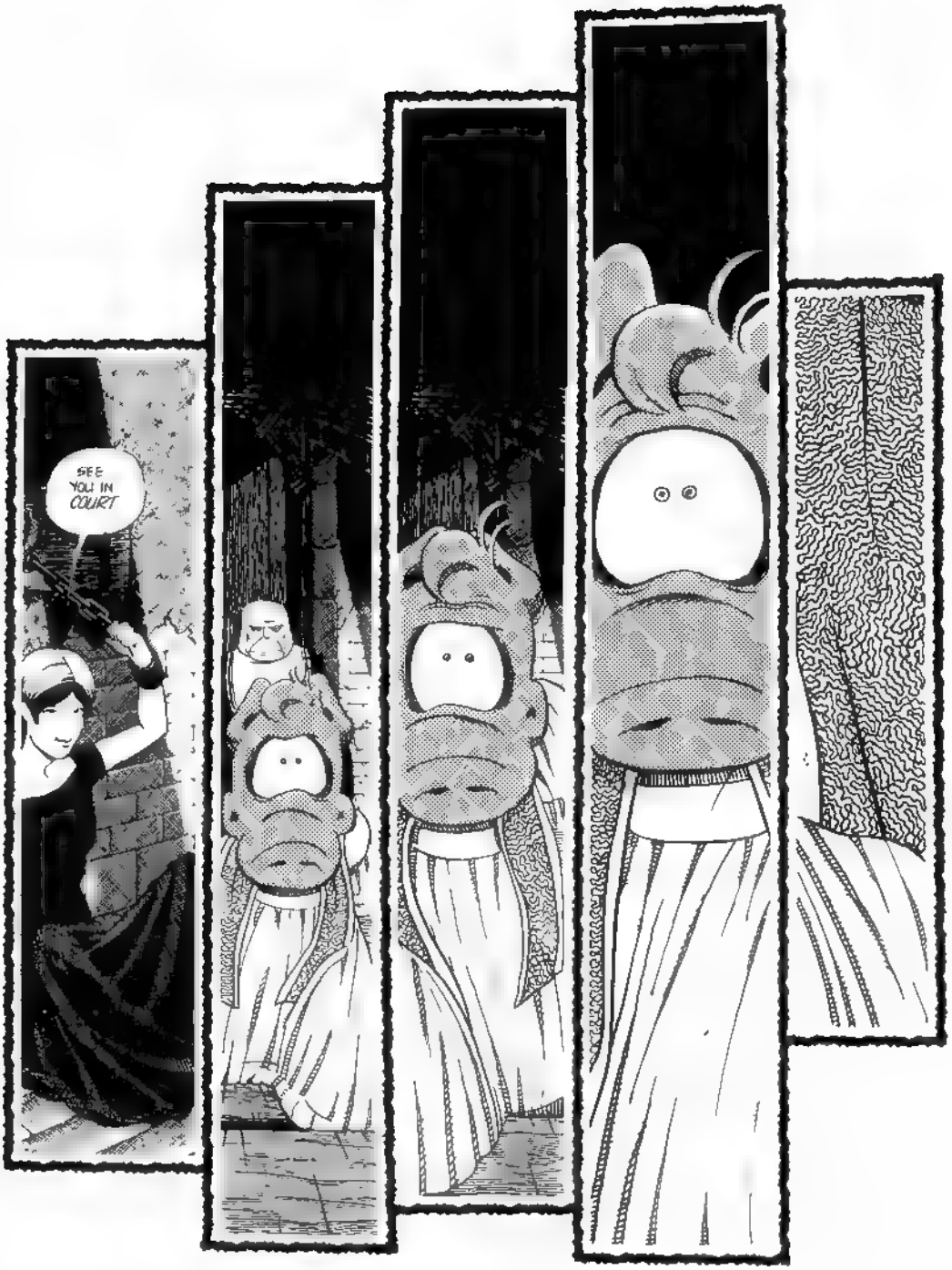
YOUR PERFECTION I'M AFRAID THERE IS ANOTHER FLAW IN THE RE CAST SPHERE ...
NO GREAT SURPRISE THERE EH, FATHER?
I HAVE ORDERED IT CAST A
... THIRD TIME
I HOPE


I HOPE THAT IS AS YOU WISHED YOUR PERFECTION
OH I.M. AYE WELL DONE
AYE
AND NOW IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE LEAVE FOR THE UPPER CITY THE THRONE ROOM IS BEING READIED...
WELL, ACTUALLY, CEREBUS
IS BEING READIED AND THERE ARE A NUMBER OF RITES WHICH MUST BE PERFORMED BY YOUR PERFECTION
BEFORE MID NIGHT


HM
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME FOR?
YOU'RE THE POPE
...HM...
AND THE CEREMONIAL ROBES
MUST BE MODIFIED THESE THINGS TAKE TIME


.. UHH..
AT YOUR PLEASURE YOUR PERFECTION
UHH..
OH NOW.. DON'T YOU GO WORRYING ABOUT ME
YOU BOYS JUST RUN ALONG AND HAVE FUN


SHOO



NEXT: THE TRIAL

A COLLECTOR'S DREAM...ON VIDEOCASSETTE

MEET

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The Spirit, Contract with God

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•• *Silver Surfer, The New Gods* •

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• *Green Arrow*

BERNI WRIGHTSON
• *Swamp Thing, Frankenstein*

MOEBIUS
Arzach, Heavy Metal

FRANK MILLER
• *Ronin, Batman,*
• *The Dark Knight Returns*

DAVE SIM
Cerebus the Aardvark

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AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION "C", KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave,

Just got done with Cerebus #90. The story was o.k. but the ad on the back cover was super (AARDVARKS AGAINST APARTHEID). My respect for you grew even more, not as an artist but as a person who does more than just sit behind a desk and draw. I'm 15 years old and I have been reading your Cerebus series since issue 39 (Cost me a fortune in back issues). If it's asking too much, how about a "Just Say No" ad. You must realize there are kids such as I who read and admire your work.

There are so many people who are screwing up their lives because of Drugs. Please take this into consideration.

Sincerely,

James Kan (student at Park Hill High School)
5410 NW Waukomis Drive,
Kansas City, MO., 64151

This has got to be a joke of some kind, right?

****

Dear Dave,

I'm not writing to heap great gobs of ego-inflating praise upon you and your work. I have a question.

A female friend of mine went out once with this guy who was an avid CEREBUS fan. After this one date she told him that she wasn't interested anymore. 'But he still was and he began to exhibit eccentric, borderline psychotic behavior such as chasing her into her dorm room, attempting to pick the lock with a knife, damaging the lock in such a way that she was trapped, scrawling cryptic messages upon her door (including a portrait of the earth-pig), and on a later occasion, sneaking up and locking her neck in a Kryptonite bicycle lock (she is small-necked, but big-headed, making her the perfect target for this sort of thing).

My question is: Is the fact that this person reads CEREBUS related to his behavior? If so, should I and your other readers be concerned about any psychological damage we may be inflicting upon ourselves? Should we call Tipper Gore? Who's the Canadian equivalent to Tipper Gore? Would any self-respecting Canadian mother name her child Tipper?

Just Wondering.

Baldwin Cheng
1409 S.E. Fifth St., #3.
Minneapolis, MN., 55414

Lighten up, man. Eccentric, borderline psychotic behavior is what makes the world go 'round. Everybody's sane until you get to know them.

****

Dear Dave,

You're doomed.

Sorry, but that's the way it is. And at such an early age, too.

After cackling my way through issue 92 I turned to the letters pages and found to my surprise that I had been immortalized in black and white. "Wow! My first letter printed ever!"

Egad. My literary maidenhead broached by no less a personage than that noted rascal, Dread Pirate Sim. What an ego gratification. (Portrait of a novice letterhack who has arrived. Smoking jacket, fine cigars, and Napoleon brandy; A large desk near a crackling fireplace in the den. Trusted servants moving silently as insightful advice is given to heads of state.)

Move over, Maple!

Then I reread the letter.

Gaahh!

My sentiments are reflected honestly enough, but somehow I end up sounding like a country cousin, with pigsty on his boots and straw in his hair.

Dammit, Dave, if you're going to print a fellow's letter, give him some warning, will you? I could have punched it up a bit, maybe hired a ghost, even taken some creative writing courses at the local community college. Instead I find all my communication shortcomings exposed to public ridicule.

That's it, Sim. It's all over but the embalming.

Some day you'll be sitting on a panel at a convention and a large, brutish-looking man, smelling faintly of hog, is going to heckle you right into the ground. You'll slink out of the auditorium humiliated beyond belief, take to strong drink and evil companions, and spend your declining years a penniless, broken man. Serves you right.

Uh, golly, I hope this doesn't upset your '87 World Tour plans. I still don't have your autograph. Heh Heh Heh.

Schizophrenically yours,

Rick L. Santman
12065 Elmdale Drive
Manchester, MI 48158

Pig shit. Pig shit on his boots. Not pigsty. Pig shit. Otherwise not a bad second letter, right, folks?

****

Dear Dave,

I'm sorry, I just can't sit idly by and watch this happen to Cerebus. Change the letters column to fluff? THE BEST LETTERS COLUMN IN COMICS??? Listen Dave, everyone knows you're a dink. Who else would include a full color photo of himself with every issue? Hell, this comic wouldn't be half as fun to read if you weren't. People (myself included) who write to comics creators and think they should be taken seriously deserve everything they get. I'd take it as an insult if you printed this letter and didn't insult me! (Twisted, eh?)

Incidentally, I admire your balls for turning down the SIX FIGURES to sell out Cerebus. I'm sure it'll work out for the best. I doubt that the world is ready for a Cerebus Swamp Thing crossover.

Have you ever considered reprinting the early issues of Cerebus (1-20) in a normal, single-issue, comic format? I know you've already reprinted these, but I wonder if there aren't enough of us format-fetishists out here to buy 'em up as single comics. After all, doesn't it gall you that an unauthorized reprint of Cerebus #1 sells for $75?

Sincerely,

Mark Peterson
2765 Louisiana Ct., #9,
St. Louis Park, MN., 55426

Nah. I've got more important things to worry about. Like whether I'm tanning evenly.

****

Dave,

Okay, okay. I admit it. You are the boss. Of Cerebus, that is. What I think is bugging many of the readers of Cerebus is the prideful attitude you maintain in consideration of the control you have over YOUR BOOK, YES, YOUR BOOK, IT'S ALL YOUR BOOK. I, for one, am not offended by your attitude. At the same time, I will admit that it could be perceived as pure arrogance on your part.

But, I understand what it all boils down to. And that is the **fact** that you have succeeded in completely, totally protecting the creative integrity of your work. How many creators in comics can make that claim? The only person that comes immediately to mind is Will Eisner, and that, Mr. Sim, is not bad company.

You keep it up.

Bob Smith
c/o Comics 'Nuff Said!
1500 Central Avenue,
Charlotte, NC., 28205

I realized very shortly after writing the "mine, all mine" piece that a lot of people saw it as arrogance on my part. However, I think I owe it to the next generation of comic book creators to show them that they don't have to be anyone's beast of burden. Having spent five decades shuffling our feet and tugging our forelocks it was time somebody pointed out that all roads lead to the creators not the business-people. If someone else had a forum like this, I might not have had to.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave -

Seems there is a lot of stuff being thrown in 'Cerebus' these days, what with the attack on a few choice editor-types, and the harsh words to whining retailers, the latest being Dan Berger's letter in #93.

Well, I'd like to add my two cents. For every shop owner who degrades, ignores, or just refuses to stock quality material like Cerebus, Love and Rockets, Flaming Carrot, etc., and just pushes the Marvel teat in adolescent mouths, there are those who do their hardest to introduce the alternatives to the masses. Like Bruno Andreacchi, down at London's 'Bid Time Return', who let me borrow three issues of Cerebus to "see what I thought" way back in the days when ogling Kitty Pryde was the height of my comics experience. Needless to say, I fell in love with the aardvark, and when I started collecting, Bruno took an afternoon over coffee to fill me in on the story-line, the characters, and who Connie Lingus was. I've been introduced to several comics that way since then, and I know his intentions aren't all that altruistic, since he's fleeced me for "High Society" and Cerebus T-shirts since then, but still, if it wasn't for him, my money would not be going to Dave Sim every month.

So there.

So the least you can do is make a personal appearance at his store, where I promise to give you more of my money.

And if you think I'm being paid to write this, I'm not, and that Bruno always stiffs you for the bar tab and cuts his hair funny.

TWIST
8-290 Springbank Drive,
London, Ontario

I don't do personal appearances anymore, but if I did, 'Bid TIme Return' would be at the top of the list. Thanks, Bruno.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

What I can't figure out is why the story in #90 is titled "FIVE". I find your titles absolutely fascinating. And most of them at least seem to have some connection to the story. Please explain this one.

And thanks for signing my books at Moondance Comics in Hadley, MA. last year.

Somewhat dubiously,

Trevor G Woofenden Box 463,
Haydenville, MA., 01039

It was the beginning of Book Five. I would've called it "Astoria" but she wasn't in #90 and that would've confused you even more, wouldn't it?

★★★★★★★★★★

To my dearly beloved, Dave,

As an avid Cerebus fan I have finally gathered the strength in my flabby body to write a letter to my hero. I look forward to seeing you in person and since you'll never come to me I must come to you. Please arrange a flight for me in early June or late May and send my ticket a.s.a.p. special delivery to my current (new) address. Thanks!!

That was a real stupid beginning to a letter, eh? Not much has been going on since last time. So long ago! I've stagnated to the point where I am a vegetable. I thought Kitchener was bad. Home is where the heart is. I have only had one opportunity to become my real self, Vanessa, and I got too toasted to play the complete self. What a drag. And this is after being here for nine months. You really should of come down for Mardi Gras. That's where the girls show you their tits if you throw a 2¢ plastic necklace off a balcony. (I did not show mine to anyone, by the way, they never asked!!) Anyways, the city was jammed and it was a place for drunken slobs to be at ease. Me and you would not have been looked at twice for acting normal. Anyways, again, I miss you. Not a month goes by when I don't think of you once. And I love getting your books. They sell for around 5 bucks cause they don't have any here. It pays for my ladies nite drinks down at the local Peter's Place. It's a dive but I'm comfortable there. Please drop me a line and tell me what's happening in town.

A hug and a kiss.

Valerie Nyikos
New Orleans, LA.,

C'mon, Val. You know I don't have time to write letters.

★★★★★★★★★★

Well, Dave. It's like this:

I'm at home skipping school to work on my term paper supposedly, except that in all of three hours I have written no more than "A Study of the Philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre," largely because every time I sit down to work on it I get bored and pick up 3 or 4 old issues of "Church and State" instead. So now, upon realizing this, I get very depressed so I grab about 5 issues and a bowl of grape-nuts. So I'm sitting there trying to vibe some sense out of Cerebus in general and I come up with this great analogy between him and grape-nuts, which kinda is like this: You're eating a bowl of grape-nuts, riht, and it's all very groovy until you get to the bottom of the bowl where all the Micro-grape-nuts live, and they're so small that it's really hard to get them on to the spoon (the only way I was able to do it was to dump them out on my shirt and then scoop them up). Sorta like Cerebus, right, 'cause no one knows what the &*((%$'s going on anyway and if you want to get anything out of it you have to work at it with the same kind of selfless determination required to excavate Micro-grape-nuts. Neat analogy, huh?

I am incidentally the youngest person ever to write to Aardvark Comment, having just turned two last Friday.

Andy "No, it's spelled 'Alexander Luxury-Yacht' but it's pronounced 'Throat-Warbler Mangrove' Blom Portland, OR.,

Happy Birthday, and I know I speak for many of us when I say thanks for the perfect analogy.

★★★★★★★★★★

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, INC.

Hi Guys,

High Society is now sold out. The second printing will be made available in October of this year and should be (if orders justify it) available from our regular distributors. Those who did not order the first printing in time are encouraged to reserve a copy with their local shops. It will be announced in Cerebus #102 whether or not High Society (second printing) will be available through the direct sales market (based on advance orders), or, like the first printing only through direct mail.

Church and State Volume 1 (reprinting Cerebus 52-80) is scheduled to ship June 15th. Pre-publications price is $23.00 U.S. and $28.00 CDN plus $2.50 for postage. As of June 15th, the price will be increased to $25.00 U.S. and $30.00 CDN plus postage.

Cost for a box of 18 Church and State Volume 1 will be announced in Cerebus #99.

Dave

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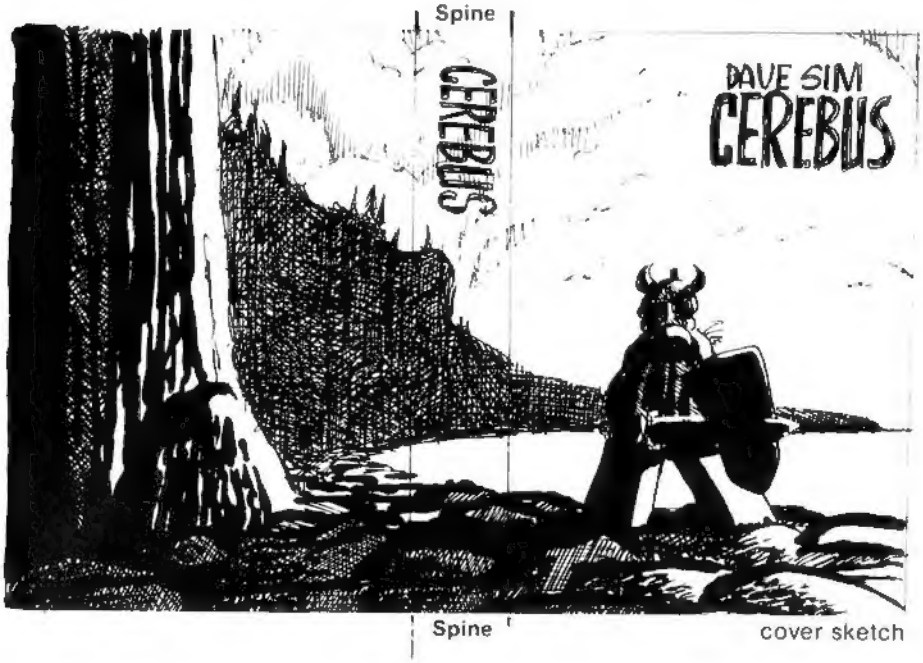

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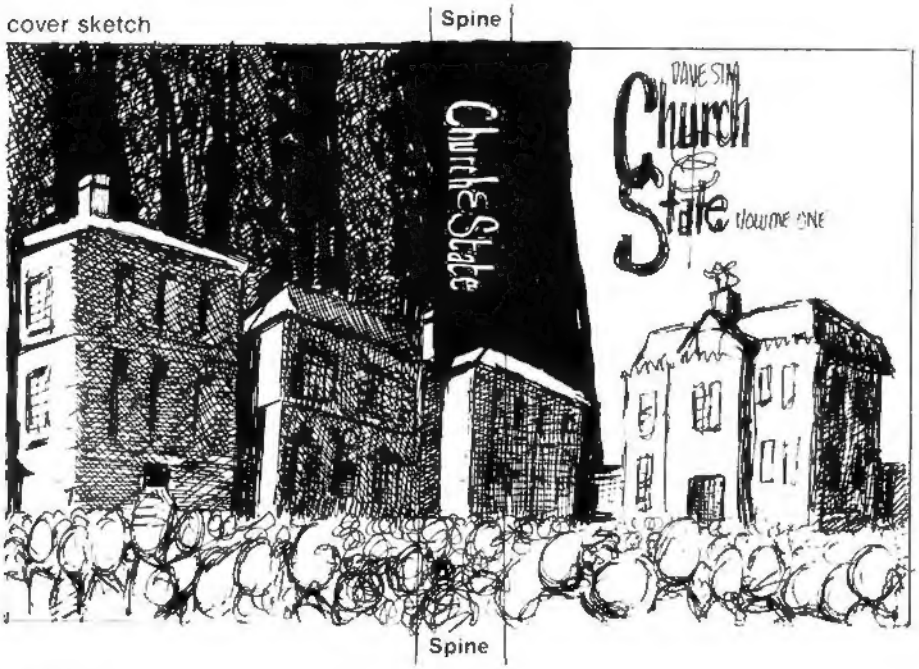

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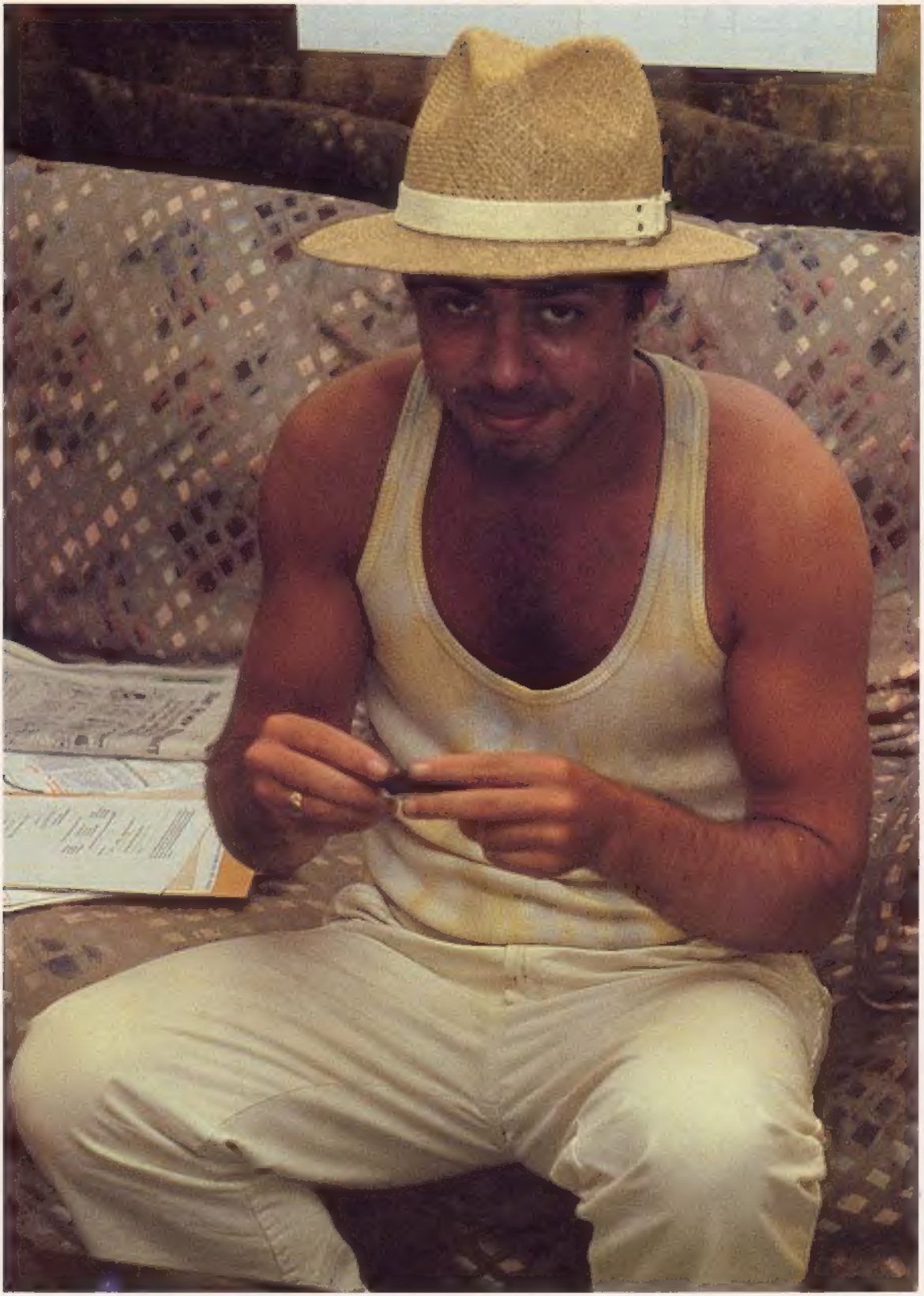

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